

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A carousel file server at a headend of a broadband network periodically and repeatedly streams application data files over in-band or out-of-band delivery paths (or a combination of both) to client applications running on a population of set-top terminals in a network. The carousel server streams multiple virtual streams carrying multicast addresses into a single downstream service (i.e., a PID stream) within a stream set using standard MPEG-2 transport protocols. The virtual streaming implemented by the multicast addressing provides another level of filtering so that set-top terminals in the network may access application data files beyond that enabled by PID filtering. The application data files in the virtual file system are flexibly partitioned among the virtual streams (or across the stream set) to thereby create a virtual file system.

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